and re-cycle of wastes and self regulation mechanism are the part of the Charter for seventeen categories of highly polluting industries.

(c) The Government has introduced voluntary scheme on undertaking environmental auditing and environmental management by the industries. However, it is mandatory for industries (large and medium category) to submit annual environmental statements to the Government.

Mercury pollution

*177. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI:
SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what studies have been made on the increasing threat of mercury pollution in the country;

(b) whether the mercury imports by India have doubled during the last five years;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) what steps are being taken by the Ministry to stop Europe from turning India into a mercury dumping ground; and

(e) whether India would attempt to use substitute for mercury which is non hazardous and is widely used abroad?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) No comprehensive scientific study, as such, is available to suggest the increasing threat of mercury pollution in the country. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) from time to time, has been monitoring the mercury concentration in Yamuna River, ground water of National CapitalTerritory as well as critical polluted areas in the country. Further, CPCB has recently initiated a study on assessment of trace toxic metals including mercury emissions from thermal power plants.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. Import of mercury in 2002-03 has risen to 531.2 MT as compared to 260 MT in 2001-02 as per the data available from Directorate General of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Commerce. Mercury is imported in India for use in industries like Chloralkali, dental amalgam,

batteries, clinical thermometers, barometers, pesticides and drugs, electrical and electronic appliances etc.

(d) and (e) Various legislative measures and initiatives have been taken for regulation of use and import of mercury.These, *inter-alia,* include the following:

- Import of mercury bearing wastes has been totally banned under the Hazardous Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules, 2003.
- Import of identified hazardous mercury compounds namely Mercuric chloride, Mercuric Oxide, Mercury acetate, Mercury fulminate, Mercury methyl chloride, Methoxy ethyl mercuric acetate, Methyl mercuric di-cyanamide and Phenyl mercury acetate have been covered under the Manufacture, Storage, Import of Hazardous Chemicals Rules, 1989 necessitating furnishing of the details to the prescribed authorities.
- No new plant and/or expansion of mercury-cell process based Chlor-alkali plants have been granted environmental clearance since 1994 under the provisions of EIA Notification, 1994. As per the available data, mercury cell based plant capacity in India is currently at 29%.
- A Charter on Corporate Responsibility for Environmental Protection for Chlor-alkali industry sector has been formulated, under which a number of action plans including switch-over to membrance cell technology and reduction of mercury comsumption at <50gm/t of product have been initiated.

Corporate safety plan

*178. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:

SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have prepared a Corporate Safety Plan (CSR) in order to ensure safety in rail journeys;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether some of the major recommendations of the